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COUNTRY

USSR

SUBJECT

Composition of the Soviet Combined Arms Army

May 1958

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1. The Soviet Combined Arms Army may consist of from three to five motorized rifle divisions, one to three tank divisions, the army artillery, and the usual service units, such as various engineer combat units, a battalion of chemical warfare service, reconnaissance battalions, and special radar reconnaissance companies. Variations may be encountered because of particular local circumstances. This organization was adopted in 1950, when the corps was discarded.
2. The army artillery is organic to the combined arms army and is a part of the army's table of organization. This artillery is distinct from attached or reinforcing artillery and from the divisional artillery which is already included in the tables of organization of the motorized rifle and tank divisions.
3. The army artillery of the combined arms army is composed of an artillery division, a rocket brigade or division, an antiaircraft division, and a tank destroyer brigade.
4. The artillery division is composed of the following:
 - a. 122-mm gun brigade, consisting of three battalions of 18 guns (pushki) each.
 - b. 152-mm gun howitzer brigade, consisting of three battalions of 18 guns each. The 152-mm gun howitzer is a new type with a range of up to 17 km.
 - c. 130-mm gun brigade, consisting of three battalions of 18 guns (pushki) each.
5. The rocket brigade or division consists of the following:
 - a. Two or three battalions of BM-24 rocket launchers with 18 launchers per battalion. The rockets are fired in salvo. The weapon resembles a katyusha and can fire conventional rockets and rockets equipped with atomic warheads.

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- b. One or possibly two battalions of BMD-20 consisting of 18 rocket launchers. The BMD-20 has four missiles which are mounted two above and two below in nest- or basket-like launchers. The weight of the projectile is 120 kg and the range is up to 30 km.
- c. One battalion of unguided rocket missiles (MRS) consisting of 12 launchers. The MRS weapon can fire conventional missiles or missiles with atomic warheads.
- 6. The antiaircraft division, which was described [] as being very weak, 25X1 consists of three battalions of 100-mm AA guns and one or two battalions of "old style" 57-mm automatic AA guns.
- 7. The tank destroyer brigade consists of three battalions of 85-mm antitank guns and one or two battalions of 100-mm antitank guns.
- 8. The army may be reinforced with the following units:
 - a. An artillery division of the type organic to a combined arms army which would be from the Supreme High Command.
 - b. Two or three antiaircraft artillery divisions.
 - c. One rocket brigade.
 - d. One to two antitank brigades.
 - e. One or two battalions of atomic artillery. These battalions may be either a battalion containing three two-gun batteries of 310-mm atomic cannon with a twenty-seven to thirty kilometer range, or a battalion containing three three-gun batteries of 400-mm mortars with a range of seventeen kilometers. These battalions will be the only atomic artillery reinforcing units in an army. There is no organization organic to the army which employs atomic weapons.
 - f. Four to five squadrons of bombers may be attached.
 - g. Four to five squadrons of fighter-bombers may be attached.
 - h. One engineer brigade (inzhenerno-sapernaya brigade).
 - i. Various engineer pontoon units.

The extent of reinforcement of an army making the main effort varies according to the situation, e.g., the mission of the army and the disposition of enemy forces. The reinforcements to be allocated to an army are determined by the t. [] a Front does not have units organic to it for service to an army, but rather is allocated units by the Supreme High

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Command: [redacted] the allocation of atomic weapons to an army 25X1
 may be determined by the Front. The battalions which have atomic weapons are under Front control. [redacted] atomic aviation is under the control of the Supreme High Command, but that even atomic aviation may be allocated to Fronts, i.e., a certain number of atomic strikes may be allocated to a Front. 25X1

10. In a Combined Arms Army offensive operation the immediate task of an army which is making the main effort is the seizure and control of the operational defenses of the enemy, the depth of which extends up to seventy kilometers. The time required for this is two days.
11. The army making the main effort executes the maneuver as a penetration, and envelopments or encirclements of an objective such as a city are carried out by the second echelon of the army and the army reserves. The latter two elements are committed early and, employing atomic strikes, they by-pass centers of resistance and advance as rapidly as possible to disorganize the enemy rear. The reduction of centers of resistance is carried out as secondary missions by the reserves.
12. The first enemy defensive belt, or main defensive position, may consist of two or three successive defensive positions which are not necessarily continuous. Conventional artillery preparation is used against the forward defensive position. The initial blows are directed against the regimental reserves of front-line regiments, and the next blows are directed at the enemy's divisional reserve regiment. Atomic strikes by artillery and mortars are directed against the second defensive position, i.e., the corps reserve, and the third defensive position. If two Soviet motorized rifle divisions are employed abreast in the zone of penetration, with a tank division farther back, in the assembly area, ready to exploit the penetration, the forward, motorized rifle divisions will be in close contact with the enemy forward positions. Atomic strikes by artillery and mortars are made only against the second and third defensive positions, to avoid risk to the friendly forward elements. Other atomic strikes are directed against the enemy's operational reserves.
13. Soviet doctrine calls for from twenty-five to forty atomic strikes to be allocated to an army which is making the main effort. Some of the strikes will be made by artillery and mortars, but the greater number will be of a greater size, delivered by other means. In connection with the atomic strike against the corps reserve, the KRS unit and the KB-20 are employed.

The follow-up mission is the seizure of the main army operational objective in the area within the offensive zone of the army. This means the breakthrough of the entire enemy army defensive system and a penetration into the enemy army rear, including the defeat of army group reserves and the seizure of the basic army objective. The width of the breakthrough is between seventeen and twenty-five kilometers, which is the width of the army front. Usually this is executed three divisions abreast. It is also possible to effect a breakthrough using divisions abreast. This is done in order to commit the tank division later.

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This breakthrough extends to a depth of 200 kilometers or more. The follow-up mission is accomplished in three to five days.

15. The exercise of control of troops has been changed. In the past there was a command post where the army commander, the chief of staff, and all of the basic staff officers were located and there was also a command observation post which was forward position. At present there is still an army headquarters in which the commander and the bulk of the staff and other officers are located, and another headquarters which is now called the reserve command group and which is headed by the deputy army commander, who also has a portion of the staff sections. Both of these groups are located about the same distance back from the front line, approximately twenty to twenty-five kilometers, and they are separated one from the other by a distance of at least five kilometers, so that a single atomic strike cannot paralyze both groups. The advance observation post is no longer established.

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